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United Nations Mission in Kosovo

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## **SRSG and COMKFOR visit Klinë/Klina municipality**

PRISTINA – SRSG Søren Jessen-Petersen and COMKFOR Lt. General Giuseppe Valotto today visited Klinë/Klina municipality where they held meetings with Municipal Officials, Kosovo Serb returnees and IDPs, and families of missing persons.

The SRSG congratulated the Municipal President Ramë Manaj and the municipal authorities for their leadership and initiative in implementing Standards and pushing forward the returns process in the municipality. “Klinë/Klina is one of the leading municipalities in Kosovo in implementing standards, which is good for the society here because that is what standards is all about,” the SRSG said, “I have heard strong commitment on the part of the President and the Municipality to continue implementing Standards and continue working for the return of the displaced persons.”

The SRSG praised the Kosovo Serb returnees for their courageous and difficult decision to return to Klinë/Klina. “You are back, but you are not yet home, as all the conditions necessary for your re-integration into the society here are not yet in place,” the SRSG said, “But you have a solid foundation here for a very successful way forward: the commitment on the part of the Municipality and the welcoming community, combined with the courage on the part of the returnees, their determination to come back and rebuild their lives.” Promising full support in moving the process forward, the SRSG said, “I personally will work very hard on that.”

He described the issue of missing persons as “one of the top humanitarian priorities” in Kosovo and also in Serbia, where there are also families of missing persons. The SRSG said, “We will not rest until each and every family with missing persons has certainty on what happened to their loved ones. We cannot rest because as long as they do not have clarity, they cannot rest and get on with their lives.”

Afterwards, the SRSG and COMKFOR, accompanied by the Municipal President, walked down to the part of Klinë/Klina town where some Kosovo Serb families have returned and visited the home of a returnee family. The SRSG commended the returnees for their pioneering initiative, which he hoped would encourage urban returns in other parts of Kosovo as well. “It is time to leave the tragedy of the past behind and move forward together,” he said, “We are making progress; it is slow, but we are moving in the right direction.”